

County's Superintendent of Schools since 1990, and is being honored by the Kremen School of Education and Human Development.

Dr. Mehas was born and raised in Fresno, graduated from Fresno High in 1957, and earned his Bachelor's degree from California State University, Fresno. He continued his education at University of California, Los Angeles, where he received his Master's degree, and went on to University of Southern California, where he secured a Doctorate in Education.

Pete has served the public for many years as an educational advocate. He was Secretary of Education to Governor George Deukmejian, and also a member of the California State Board of Education and Board of Governors for California Community Colleges.

His efforts have not gone unnoticed—Dr. Mehas has been appointed by four presidents and three governors to major commissions, boards, and advisory committees committed to making education a priority throughout our Nation. He has appeared on national television's NBC's "Today" show and ABC's "Good Morning America," and was the only educator invited to address the National Republican Convention in Houston, Texas in 1992.

Dr. Mehas' accomplishment list is long and includes USC School of Education Distinguished Lecturer, CSU Fresno School of Social Science Distinguished Alumni Award, Honorary Life Member in the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, NAACP Presidents Award, Rose Ann Vuich Ethical Leadership Award, and most recently the Kremen School of Education and Human Development "Noted Alumni Recipient" for significant contributions in the field of education.

His efforts have been exhaustive, and we are continually lucky that his family, wife Demi and daughters Alethea and Andreanna have been willing to share all that Dr. Mehas has to offer—he has made an amazing impact on our community.

## SIKH LEADER AGAIN SPEAKS OUT FOR FREEDOM FOR KHALISTAN

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, there are encouraging developments in the fight for freedom for minorities in India. It looks like the people of Nagaland are making progress in their negotiations with India to achieve autonomy. This is a potentially significant development that will begin, at long last, the unraveling of the web of Indian oppression. Can Kashmir and Khalistan be far behind?

To add to this, the fire of freedom continues to burn as brightly as ever in Punjab, Khalistan. On December 7, a Sikh leader named Simranjit Singh Mann, who is a former Member of India's Parliament and has held events right here in the Capitol and met many Members of Congress, again spoke out for independence for the Sikh homeland, Khalistan. Mr. Mann put his party, the Akali Dal, Amritsar, on record for independence. He pledged that he would lead a peaceful movement for independence, which he said was a dream of the Sikh people that "will be mate-

rialized one day." It looks like that day is getting closer.

The government of Punjab acted last year to cancel all water agreements with the other states in India, by which Punjab's water was being diverted to those other states. In so doing, they declared the sovereignty of the state of Punjab. Imagine that, Mr. Speaker. They are openly claiming their sovereignty. This is good to see.

Mr. Speaker, when India became independent, the Sikhs were supposed to get an independent state in Punjab. But the Indian leaders assured them they would have "the glow of freedom" there, so they stayed with India. Well, that "glow of freedom" has taken the lives of over 250,000 Sikhs as well as over 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 89,000 Kashmiri Muslims, and tens of thousands of other minority people. It has resulted in 52,268 Sikhs being held as political prisoners under a repressive law called TADA that expired in 1995. It is time for real freedom for the Sikhs, the Nagas, the Kashmiris, and all people in the subcontinent.

The essence of democracy is self-determination. If India wants to be treated as a democracy, it must allow self-determination and all other rights to all its citizens. We should not provide any money to India until it does. In 1948, India promised to hold a plebiscite to let the people of Kashmir decide their status. It's now 56 years later and they are still waiting. Similarly, the demand for self-determination in Khalistan, in Nagaland, and elsewhere has been met with nothing but violent resistance. Is that democracy, Mr. Speaker? Is that freedom?

The Tribune, a newspaper in Chandigarh, Punjab, carried excellent coverage of Mr. Mann's remarks in its December 8 issue. I would like to place that article in the RECORD at this time for the information of my colleagues.

[From the (Chandigarh, India) Tribune, Dec. 8, 2004]

### MANN REVERTS TO SOVEREIGN PUNJAB THEME

LUDHIANA, Dec. 7.—Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) supremo Simranjit Singh Mann yesterday reverted to the theme of sovereign Punjab, declaring that his party would launch a peaceful movement to realise this dream. He said his party had never given up the demand for a separate and sovereign Punjab as the Sikhs' was a separate nationality, foundations of which had been laid down by Guru Gobind Singh himself.

Mr. Mann, who was here to preside over a meeting of the party office-bearers at Gurdwara Akalgarh, said to ensure lasting peace in South Asia in the face of deep hostility between "Hindu civilisation (India) and Muslim civilisation (Pakistan)", it was in the interest of the people of the region to create a neutral and buffer sovereign state.

He maintained that the foundations for a separate sovereign Sikh state had been laid down by Guru Gobind Singh and Banda Singh Bahadur followed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This dream was furthered by "Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale" and "would be materialised one day". He said since both Pakistan and India had nuclear weapons, it was necessary that some buffer state should be created so that the two countries did not come face to face with each other.

Mr. Mann refused to give the geographical outline of the "sovereign state" envisioned by him. He evaded an answer to a question whether it included the part of the state which is now with Pakistan.

Welcoming the close cooperation between the Pakistani Punjab and the Indian Punjab, Mr. Mann claimed it was he who had initiated this move by demanding way back in 1990 that the border between the two Punjabs should be opened up for the people to cross over.

To a question on the demand of the Dal Khalsa that ban on cow slaughter in Punjab should go, Mr. Mann said he or his organisation had nothing to do with that organisation (Dal Khalsa). At the same time, he said, he or his party would not like to hurt the sentiments of a majority of people as "Hindus held the cow to be sacred and their sentiments should be respected".

Mr. Mann also accused Shiromani Akali Dal leader Parkash Singh Badal of having connived with Hindu organisations in demolishing the Babri mosque. He alleged that Mr. Badal had sent a special jatha, led by Mr. Avtar Singh Hit, to Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, to join the kar sevaks for demolishing the Babri mosque.

IN HONOR OF JOE HARRIS

**HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS**

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the life-long service of Joe Harris. Mr. Harris, hailed as a man who always put everyone before himself, spent the last 34 years of his life serving my constituents as a fire fighter in the City of Denton, Texas. Mr. Harris not only served the people of Denton County but also his family and co-workers with the encouragement, warmth and generosity that defined his life.

The recent death of Mr. Harris came after years of fighting cancer. He had recently retired so he could spend more time with his family. During his career as a public servant, Mr. Harris took pride in each task that he was given. His contagious personality and love for those whom he saw day after day went far beyond his call of duty. A life-long citizen of my district, Mr. Harris served not only my constituents but our country in the United States Coast Guard. Mr. Harris was steadfast in his life of service, and I have no doubt that he has inspired everyone who came to know him.

Mr. Speaker, it is with great honor that I stand here today to commemorate the life of Joe Harris; one of our fellow public servants. May his work be a guide and inspiration to us all.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

**HON. ROSCOE G. BARTLETT**

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. BARTLETT of Maryland. Mr. Speaker, on rollcall vote No. 31, I had thought that I had voted and that the machine had accepted my vote. Apparently, it did not; therefore, I ask unanimous consent that the CONGRESSIONAL RECORD show that had my vote been accepted, I would have voted "yes" on rollcall No. 31.

**A PROCLAMATION HONORING  
GLENN A BLACK ON HER 92ND  
BIRTHDAY**

**HON. ROBERT W. NEY**

OF OHIO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. NEY. Mr. Speaker:

Whereas, Glenna Black was born on February 16, 1913 and is celebrating her 92nd birthday; and

Whereas, Glenna Black has been a positive influence on those individuals who have been fortunate to meet her; and

Whereas, Glenna Black has remained active among her community and friends; and

Whereas, Glenna Black has exemplified a life of love and dedication to all of her family and friends.

Therefore, I join with the family and friends of Glenna and the residents of the entire 18th Congressional District of Ohio in wishing Glenna Black a very happy 92nd birthday.

**SIKHS ARRESTED FOR RAISING  
FLAG ARE DENIED BAIL**

**HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS**

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. TOWNS. Mr. Speaker, on January 26, India celebrated its Republic Day, the anniversary of the adoption of its constitution. On that day a group of Sikh activists raised the Sikh flag at a Gurdwara in the city of Amritsar in accordance with Sikh tradition. For this, complaints were issued against 35 Sikhs and 31 have been arrested.

Now eleven of them have had their bail denied, keeping them in detention. The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that speaking out for Khalistan is not a crime, yet they are charged with "sedition" and "making inflammatory speeches" for raising a flag and speaking out for freedom for the Sikh homeland.

Mr. Speaker, what kind of democracy is this? The Movement Against State Repression (MASR) was already reporting that India held 52,268 political prisoners. These activists add 11 to that number.

This is just the latest illustration that exercising your freedom of speech can be a very dangerous thing in India if you are a minority. India has a pattern of repression. It has killed over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians in Nagaland, over 90,000 Kashmiri Muslims, thousands of other Christians and Muslims throughout the country, and tens of thousands of Assamese, Bodos, Dalits (the aboriginal people of South Asia), Manipuris, Tamils, and others. The U.S. State Department reported in 1994 that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties to police officers for killing Sikhs. One such bounty went to an officer who killed a three-year-old boy.

We must not just sit and watch while a country that proclaims itself "the world's largest democracy" tramples on the most basic of democratic freedoms, such as the freedom to speak out and to hold a peaceful demonstration. That is not the hallmark of a democracy. It is the hallmark of a police state.

The time has come to let India know that we are watching and to let them know that this is unacceptable.

There are steps that we can take to support the rights of all people in south Asia. It is time that we take these steps. They include cutting off our aid and trade with India and putting the Congress on record in support of self-determination for the Sikhs of Punjab, Khalistan, the Christian people of Nagaland, the Kashmiris, and all the people of South Asia who are seeking freedom. Only by exercising their right to self-determination, which is the essence of democracy, can the people there finally live in freedom, peace, and prosperity.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to place the Council of Khalistan's very informative press release on the denial of bail to these Sikh activists into the RECORD at this time.

[From Council of Khalistan]

**BAIL DENIED FOR 11 SIKHS ARRESTED FOR  
HOISTING SIKH FLAG IN AMRITSAR—IS THIS  
DEMOCRACY, FREEDOM OF SPEECH?**

Eleven Sikhs who were arrested for raising the Sikh flag on Republic Day, January 26, have been denied bail. Thirty-five Sikhs were charged and 31 are being held. They raised the saffron flag of Khalsa Raj at Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj in Amritsar. They have been charged with sedition and "making inflammatory speeches." Khalsa Raj Party President Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan said that they had raised the flag according to Sikh tradition.

Punjab Pradesh Congress Party President Hanspal said, "We will not allow them to raise their heads for Khalistan." Maninder Singh Bitta, President of the All-India Youth Congress, demanded that Dr. Chohan and others be deported to Pakistan, claiming they are Pakistani agents. Former Chief Minister Badal said, "We will not permit the militancy to raise its head again."

"How can India call itself democratic when it suppresses a basic right like freedom of speech?" said Dr. Gurmit Singh Aulakh, President of the Council of Khalistan, which leads the Sikh struggle for freedom. "The Punjab and Haryana High Court has already ruled in the case of the late Colonel Partap Singh that speaking in support of freedom for Khalistan is not a crime," Dr. Aulakh said. "How can these activists be arrested for something that is not a crime?"

The Indian government has murdered over 250,000 Sikhs since 1984, more than 300,000 Christians since 1948, over 90,000 Muslims in Kashmir since 1988, and tens of thousands of Tamils, Assamese, Manipuris, Dalits, Bodos, and others. The Indian Supreme Court called the Indian government's murders of Sikhs "worse than a genocide." According to a report by the Movement Against State Repression (MASR), 52,268 Sikhs and tens of thousands of other minorities are being held as political prisoners in India without charge or trial. Some have been in illegal custody since 1984! We demand the immediate release of all these political prisoners.

"The Sikh Nation is indebted to the leaders of Dal Khalsa who raised the Sikh flag, including Harcharan Singh Dhami, President, Kanwarpal Singh Bittu, General Secretary, Satnam Singh Paonta Sahib, and others," said Dr. Aulakh. "We praise Dr. Chohan for his remarks. But how can Sikhs like Badal, Hanspal, Bitta, and others call themselves Sikhs when they deny the Sikh aspirations for freedom? Clearly, they are doing the bidding of the Indian government, which controls them."

The Sikh Nation declared its independence from India on October 7, 1987 and formed the Council of Khalistan at that time to lead the struggle for independence. When India be-

came independent, Sikhs were equal partners in the transfer of power and were to receive their own state, but the weak and ignorant Sikh leaders of the time were tricked into staying with India on the promise that they would have "the glow of freedom" and no law affecting the Sikhs would pass without their consent. Sikhs ruled an independent and sovereign Punjab from 1710 to 1716 and again from 1765 to 1849 and were recognized by most of the countries of the world at that time. Sikhs do not accept the Indian constitution. No Sikh representative has ever signed it.

Indian police arrested human-rights activist Jaswant Singh Khaira after he exposed their policy of mass cremation of Sikhs, in which over 50,000 Sikhs have been arrested, tortured, and murdered, then their bodies were declared unidentified and secretly cremated. Khaira was murdered in police custody. His body was not given to his family. No one has been brought to justice for the kidnapping and murder of Jaswant Singh Khaira. The police never released the body of former Jathedar of the Akal Takht Gurdev Singh Kaunke after SSP Swaran Singh Ghotna murdered him. He has never been tried for the Jathedar Kaunke murder. In 1994, the U.S. State Department reported that the Indian government had paid over 41,000 cash bounties for killing Sikhs.

India is not one country; it is a polyglot thrown together for the convenience of the British colonialists. It is doomed to break up as they did. Last year, the Punjab Legislative Assembly passed a bill cancelling the government's daylight robbery of Punjab river water. The Assembly explicitly stated the sovereignty of Punjab.

"I urge the international community to help us free Khalistan from Indian occupation," Dr. Aulakh said. "Freedom is the birthright of all people and nations," he said. "The arrest and denial of bail for these activists for raising the Sikh flag and making speeches shows that there is no freedom for Sikhs within India," he said. "As Professor Darshan Singh, a former Jathedar of the Akal Takht, said, 'If a Sikh is not for Khalistan, he is not a Sikh.'" Dr. Aulakh noted. "We must continue to press for freedom," he said. "Without political power, religions cannot flourish and nations perish. A sovereign Khalistan is essential for the survival of the Sikh religion and the Sikh Nation."

**LEADER IN EDUCATION**

**HON. JIM COSTA**

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

*Tuesday, February 15, 2005*

Mr. COSTA. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor and congratulate Rutherford "Bud" Gaston, Sr., of Fresno, California. Bud has received many noted awards throughout the years and most recently he is a recipient of the Kremen School of Education and Human Development "Noted Alumni Award".

Mr. Gaston was born in Georgia, but attended high school in Brakenridge, Pennsylvania where he graduated from Har Brack High School. Then Bud moved to Fresno, where he attended California State University, Fresno and received a Bachelor's degree in Education, and a Master's Degree in Education Administration.

Bud joined Fresno Unified School District in 1953 as a teacher at Columbia School. After ten years, he became Principal of Tieman and